

South Dakota

Board of Service to the Blind & Visually Impaired

2018

Annual Report





**BOARD OF SERVICE TO THE BLIND AND
VISUALLY IMPAIRED**

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Dear Governor Daugaard:

It is my honor to present to you the 2018 South Dakota Board of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI) Annual Report. I would like to thank you for your support of Board activities including the National Disability Employment Awareness Month and the Governor's awards that recognize employers and the abilities of citizens with disabilities in the workplace. I would also like to take this opportunity to reflect on the importance of sharing your belief in the ability of citizens with disabilities to add value to the workforce. Through your leadership over the last 8 years, you have made an extremely positive impact on your fellow citizens in South Dakota. Your vision has truly made us an "Employment First" state that continues to be a model for our nation.



This report has been prepared in accordance to regulations stipulated by the federal Department of Education, Rehabilitation Services Administration. The report is prepared yearly to capture the impact services have on South Dakota citizens who are blind or visually impaired. This year the report analyzes the programs and services delivered by SBVI. The report also provides snapshots of the activities conducted by the board over the last year. The comprehensive statewide needs assessment, public forums and consumer satisfaction surveys are some examples of activities that help SBVI jointly develop goals and strategies to address the needs identified.

In presenting the annual report, I would like to acknowledge the professionalism and dedication of my colleagues whose commitment makes South Dakota an even better place to live for citizens who are blind and visually impaired.

Respectfully Submitted,

Catherine Greseth

Chair, Board of SBVI

CC: Christyne Cavataio, Rehabilitation Services Administration State Liaison
Gloria Pearson, Secretary, Department of Human Services
SBVI Board Members

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

December 21, 2018

We are grateful for Governor Daugaard's support of employment of citizens with disabilities. South Dakota ranks first in the nation for the employment rate of citizens with disabilities. Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI) ranks fourth nationally for the employment rate of citizens with vision loss (4th of vocational rehabilitation agencies for the blind). These achievements are not coincidences, but a testament to the work ethic of South Dakotans and the commitment of the State of South Dakota to provide the tools necessary to assist people to maintain or obtain employment.

Prepared in conjunction with the Board of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired, this report highlights the accomplishments of those who participated in services and the goals achieved by SBVI in 2018. The impact of services is not reflected only by data; feedback from those who participated in services provides insight into the true results of the work we do. Comments made on satisfaction surveys can be found throughout this report. These statements reflect the true impact of services provided by dedicated staff of the Division of SBVI.

Members of the Board of SBVI bring experience, both personal and professional, to guide the division on priorities. Their guidance on goals and strategies to ensure optimal service provision is invaluable. Fifty percent of members are blind or visually impaired, this perspective is critical as we move forward to improve our system to ensure quality employment outcomes for those we work with.

In the past year we have seen heightened awareness and increased activities with partner agencies in the public and private sector. SBVI has actively sought opportunities for partnerships to ensure a seamless system for job seekers who are blind or visually impaired. This has resulted in higher quality services and supports for those who participate in the vocational rehabilitation and independent living programs.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the trained professionals in SBVI who deliver services across the state. Their commitment to finding solutions regardless of the barriers faced by those they serve is commendable. Their expertise and dedication are imperative to the positive results throughout this report.

“Giving positive motivation was so appreciated and feeling not so worthless. I would have to say above and beyond my expectations. I'm so grateful for everyone's help! Because of the help I'm now working and have great health benefits to further my health in so many ways. It's a dream come true job. A job that I can be proud of and grow with. Has great health and other benefits. I am forever grateful.”

Board of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired

The mission of the Board of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired is to promote independence, employment, and full inclusion for all citizens who are blind or visually impaired.

The Board of SBVI is a 15-member advisory council appointed by the Governor. The Board reviews, analyzes and advises the Division of SBVI on responsibilities related to effectiveness of programs and policies and procedures. The Board meets four times per year and at least 50% of members must be blind or visually impaired.

Name	Hometown	Representation
Tami Francis	Sioux Falls	Business and Industry
Jill Kundtz – Member at Large	Rapid City	Business and Industry
*Eric Rippentrop	Dell Rapids	Disability Advocacy Group
Zay Norman	Hayes	Business and Industry
Cole Uecker	Pierre	Client Assistance Program
Gaye Mattke	Pierre	SBVI Director– Ex Officio
Connie Sullivan	Pierre	State Education Agency
Cheri Knispel	Rapid City	Disability Advocacy Group
Patrick Czerny	Piedmont	Community Rehab. Program
*Roberta Ecoffey	Pine Ridge	American Indian VR Services
Elaine Fritz	Baltic	Parent of Child with Disabilities
Burdette Clifford	Mission	American Indian VR Services
Tana Buresch	Sioux Falls	Parent Connection
Alan Vandenburg	Sioux Falls	VR Counselor – Ex Officio
Koni Sims – Vice Chair	Sioux Falls	Disability Advocacy Group
Catherine Greseth - Chair	Rapid City	Business and Industry/SILC
*Kay Miller	Mitchell	Business and Industry
Marcia Hultman	Pierre	Workforce Dev. Council

*Denotes members whose terms expired during 2018

Board composition is defined in the Rehabilitation Act, as amended. Nominations for Board vacancies are solicited from organizations representing people with disabilities, including the South Dakota Association of the Blind and the National Federation of the Blind of South Dakota. In addition, the Division seeks representation by current or former clients of the vocational rehabilitation program. The Board serves as an advisory council to the Division of SBVI; the Board reviews, analyzes, and advises the Division of SBVI regarding the performance of the responsibilities relating to eligibility, the extent, scope and effectiveness of services provided, and functions performed by SBVI that affect ability of individuals with vision loss to achieve employment outcomes. The Board also assists with development of the state plan and evaluates the effectiveness of the vocational rehabilitation program including client satisfaction. Board members recommend the format for public forums and serve as facilitators of the forums which are held to obtain input for the state plan.

Board Committees

Executive Committee – The Executive Committee consists of the Board Chair, Vice Chair, and Member at Large. The Executive Committee plans agendas for Board meetings and handles decisions between regularly scheduled meetings and other activities assigned by the Board.

Strategic Planning and Policy Development Committee – This committee provides input on strategic planning and policy development and evaluates state plan updates, consumer satisfaction surveys, and SBVI policy revisions. Recommendations from the committee are brought to the full Board.

Public Relations Committee – The Public Relations Committee recommends activities to promote the programs and services offered by SBVI and assists SBVI in designing and conducting outreach activities.

Assistive Technology Advisory Committee (ATAC) – ATAC is comprised of individuals who are knowledgeable about the latest innovations in assistive technology. Members advise SBVI in matters concerning assistive technology.

Board Meetings

The Board meets at least four times per year. Meetings during the report period were held on the following dates and locations:

December 8, 2017, Pierre, SD

March 23, 2018, Pierre, SD

June 18, 2018, Sioux Falls, SD

September 21, 2018, Pierre, SD

Meetings are open to the public and held at accessible locations. Meetings are announced via the SBVI website, the State of South Dakota news website and Board Portal, and through a variety of publications throughout the state. Meeting dates are determined by the Board; agendas and minutes are posted on the Open Government Board Portal at: <http://boardsandcommissions.sd.gov>



Board of SBVI Members

Board Activities

Governor's Awards for Employment of People with Disabilities

Governor Daugaard recognized individuals and employers for their contributions to the rehabilitation and employment of South Dakotans with disabilities on September 25, 2018 in the Capitol Rotunda. Following are the recipients of the 2018 awards:

- Catherine Greseth of Rapid City - Outstanding Citizen with a Disability
- Emma Lemus Arriaga of Watertown - Outstanding Citizen with a Disability
- Ryan Bartz of Sioux Falls - Outstanding Employee with a Disability
- Burger King #1187 of Mobridge - Outstanding Private Employer (Small Employer)
- Global Polymer of Madison - Outstanding Private Employer (Large Employer)
- Outdoor Campus West/South Dakota Game Fish and Parks of Rapid City - Outstanding Employer
- Dave Halverson of Sturgis – Outstanding Transition Services



Catherine Greseth, Chair of the Board of SBVI was honored with the Outstanding Citizen with a Disability award in recognition of outstanding achievements living with a disability and promoting independent living and employment opportunities for other individuals with disabilities. Congratulations Catherine!

The Governor's Awards ceremony is co-sponsored by the South Dakota Board of Vocational Rehabilitation, Board of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired, the Statewide Independent Living Council and DHS.

South Dakota Disability Employment Awareness Month



Gov. Dennis Daugaard proclaimed October 2018, Disability Employment Awareness Month in South Dakota. Disability Employment Awareness Month aims to raise awareness about disability employment issues and to celebrate the contributions of workers with disabilities. The 2018 theme was "America's Workforce: Empowering All".

The Board joined a host of South Dakota agencies and organizations in sponsoring

activities in thirteen communities in October to promote awareness and to help foster a disability-friendly culture in the workplace.

Public Forums

The Board of SBVI sponsored two public forums in 2018. The first was held in conjunction with the National Federation of the Blind State Convention on April 2nd. Over thirty people participated, and topics included updates on activities related to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, success stories of those who have participated in SBVI services and assistive technology.



The South Dakota Association of the Blind requested a public forum in conjunction with their convention in Sioux Falls on September 7th.

Twenty-five participants were present for the forum. Topics included program updates, technology and outreach.

White Cane March

The Board of SBVI sponsored the 7th annual White Cane March by assisting with costs for billboards to educate the public about the white cane law. The event took place in Sioux Falls on October 13th with approximately 100 participants whose mission was to remind drivers to yield to pedestrians with a white cane or guide dog. The event is sponsored by a number of organizations who promote access for people with vision loss.



Public Relations

Outreach activities are a focus of the Board of SBVI to ensure citizens with vision loss have access to services. Activities are conducted to educate the public about accessibility for people with vision loss.

The Board of SBVI sponsored a booth at Disability Awareness Day during the 2018 South Dakota Legislative Session in the Capitol Rotunda in Pierre. Board Chair, Catherine Greseth and Vice Chair, Koni Sims represented the Board and took the opportunity to bring awareness of the needs of citizens with vision loss to legislators.



“Thank you for giving me the confidence and bringing back my sparkle to life.”

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM

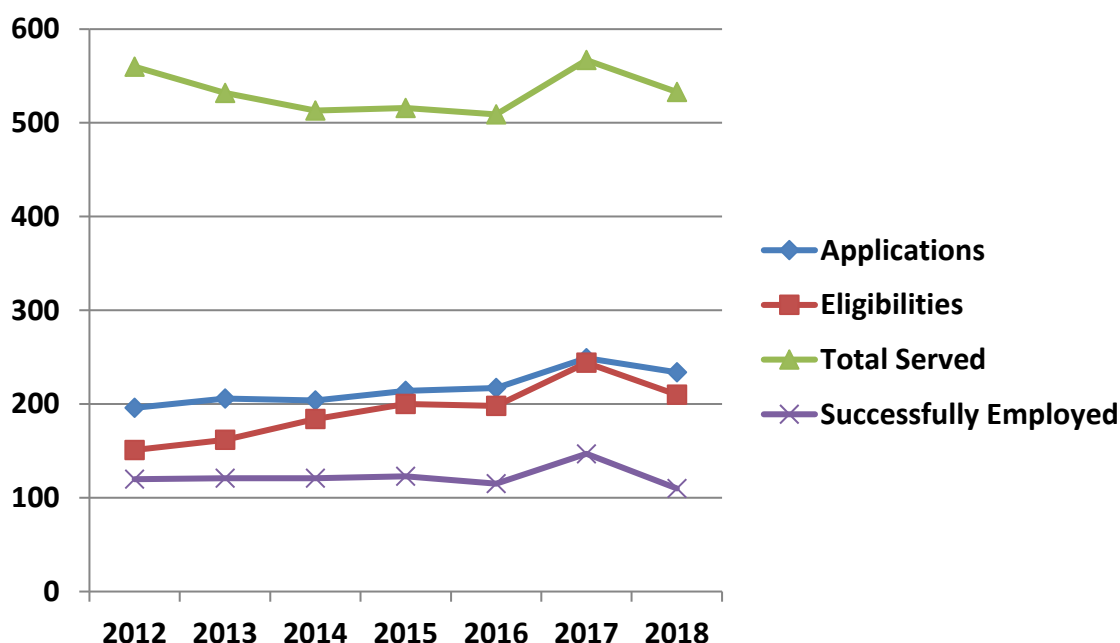
The Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired Vocational Rehabilitation Program (VR) provides individualized rehabilitation services that result in optimal employment outcomes for citizens who are blind or visually impaired. Certified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors provide specialized services throughout the State of South Dakota.

Program Year 2017 (July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018) Performance

- 533 people were served through the SBVI VR Program during Program Year 2017 (PY 17), compared to 564 people in 2017 (FFY 17).
 - 110 people were successfully rehabilitated through the vocational rehabilitation program in PY 2017, compared to 147 in FFY 17, and 115 in FFY 16.
 - Median earnings of program participants during the second quarter after exit from the program was \$3,969.16.
-

SBVI Vocational Rehabilitation Caseload Summary

The chart below illustrates the number of people who have applied for and received services from the SBVI Vocational Rehabilitation Program over the past seven years. SBVI counselors completed 234 applications, 210 eligibilities, served a total of 533 individuals, and successfully employed 110 clients, a decline compared to last year, when SBVI saw unusually high increases in all areas. SBVI counselors took an average of 21 days to determine eligibility after an application was obtained.



Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Federal Performance Measures

Effective July 1, 2017, SBVI started tracking the performance indicators listed below to meet new performance measures required by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). SBVI does not yet have a minimum required measure for these indicators, as the first two years will be used for collection of data to propose an expected level of performance. Following the proposal, SBVI will negotiate with RSA to set target levels. This process of negotiating targets will be done annually, so each year may have different expected levels of performance.

Instead of submitting this data once annually as had previously been the norm, data on all open and closed cases between July 1 and June 30 (Program Year 2017) were submitted on a quarterly basis to RSA. This Program Year timeline falls in line with the state budget year. With the federal change to Program Year, SBVI data in this VR portion of the report is also changing to Program Year unless indicated otherwise.

Primary Performance Indicators for Core Programs

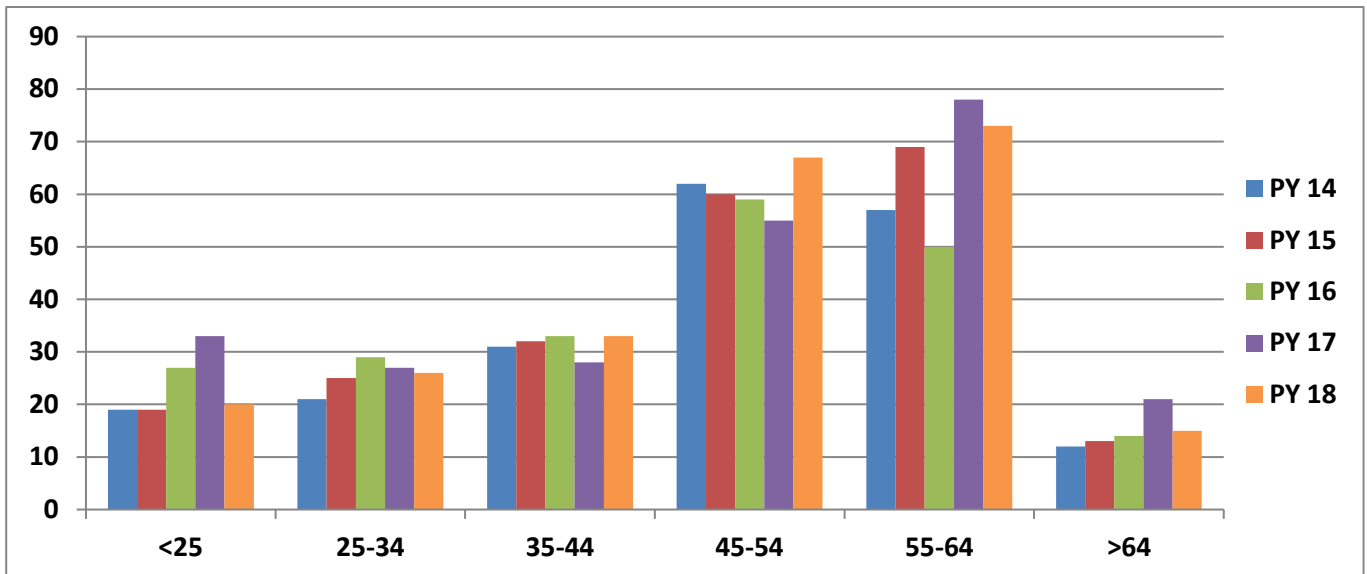
For WIOA core programs, States must report the results of primary performance indicators set forth at section 116(b)(2)(A) of WIOA:

1. The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program; ***45.45%**
2. The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program; ***Data not yet available**
3. The median earnings of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program; ***\$3,969.16**
4. The percentage of program participants who obtained a recognized postsecondary credential, or a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent during participation in or within 1 year after exit from the program. For those participants who obtained a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, the participant must also have obtained or retained employment or be in an education or training program leading to a recognized postsecondary credential within 1 year after exit from the program; ***20%**
5. The percentage of program participants who, during a program year, are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skill gains toward such a credential or employment; ***53.85%**
6. The indicator(s) of effectiveness in serving employers. ***Data not yet available**

*First year primary performance indicator data for South Dakota SBVI. Some data has not yet been compiled.

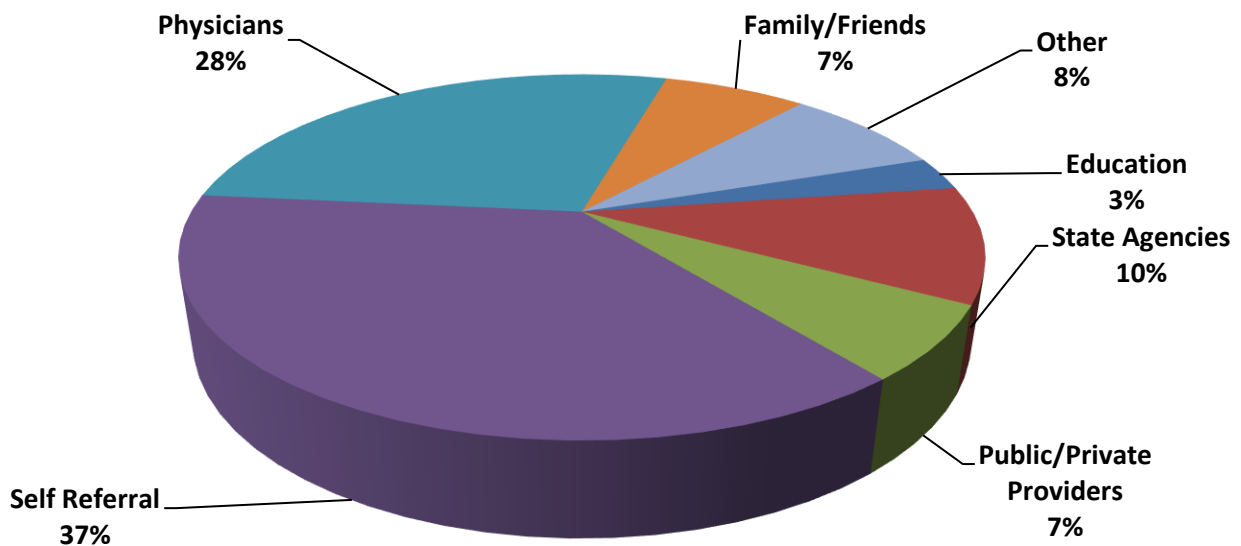
“Very caring people work in this department and genuinely care about your wellbeing.”

Age of Applicants

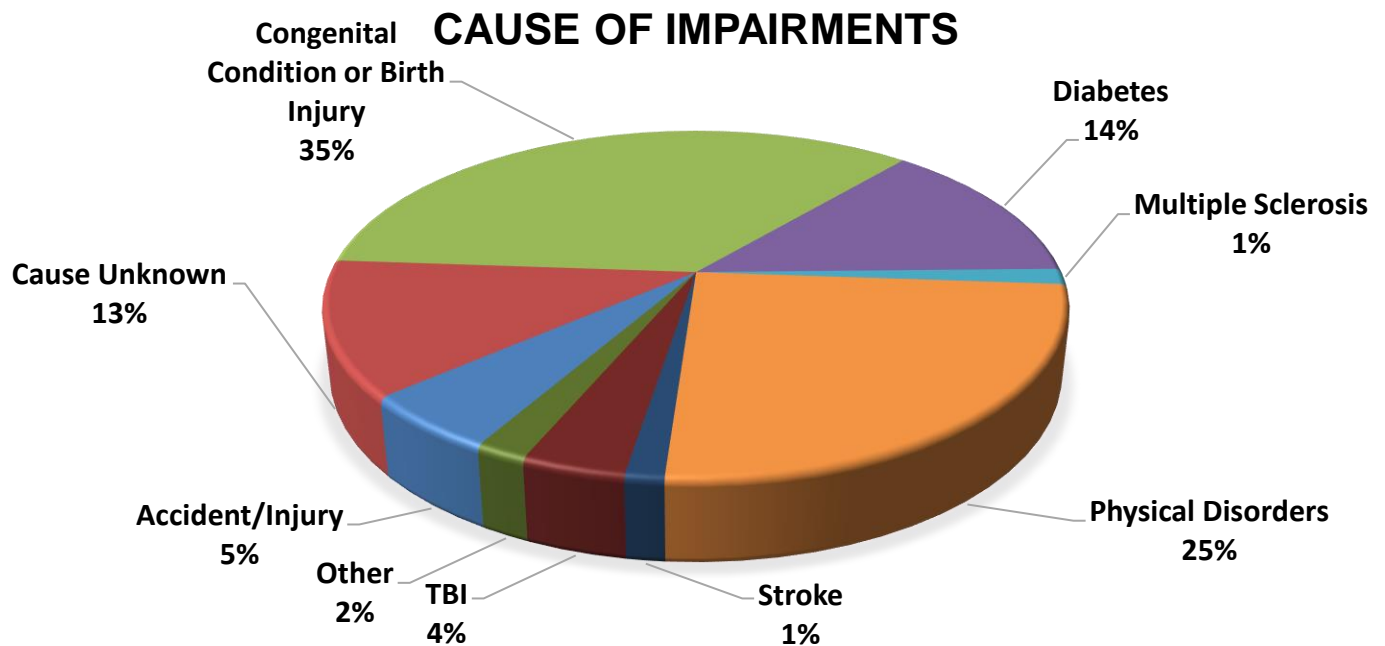


This graph illustrates the age groups of applicants for the VR program. Although SBVI takes applications from individuals starting at age 14, historically most applicants who apply for services are between the ages of 45-64 due to the progressive nature of vision loss. This past year, there was a slight increase in applicants in the 35-44 age range, and a more substantial increase in the 45-54 age range.

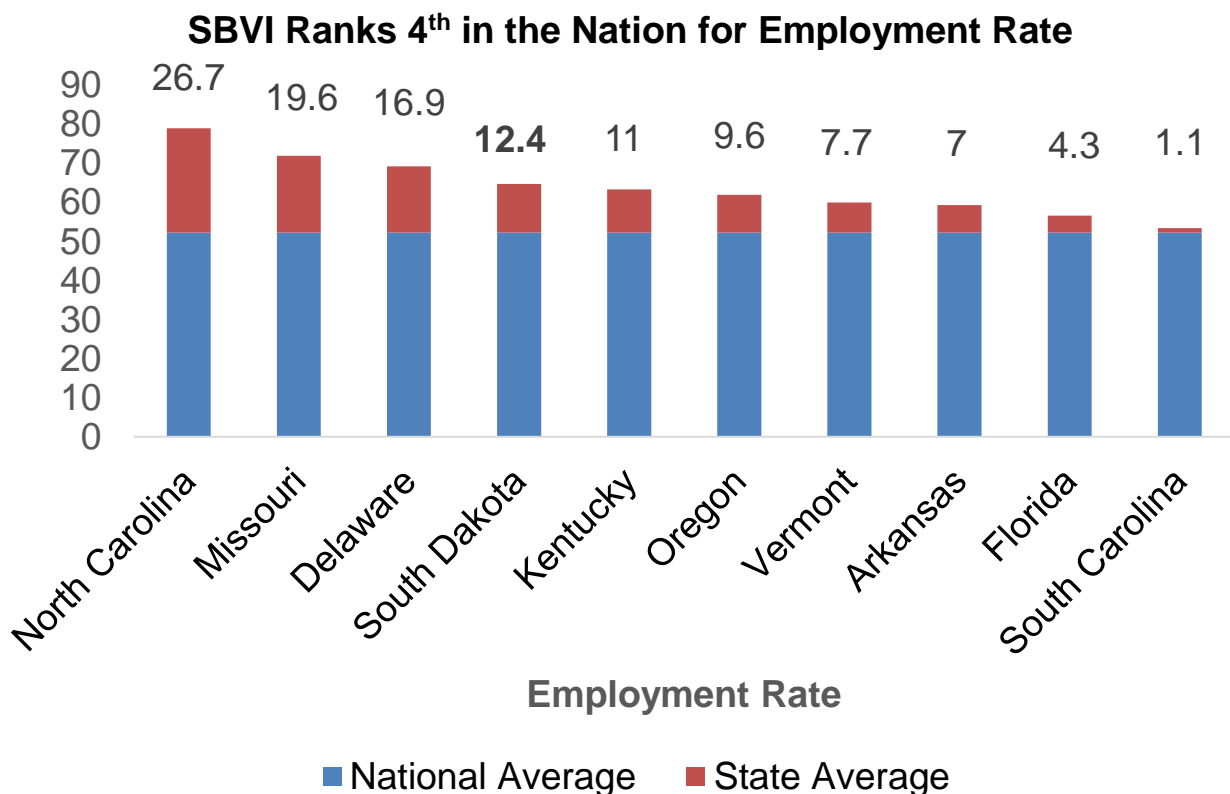
Referral Sources



Physicians and self-referrals continue to be the highest percentage of referral sources to Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired. With a focus on transition services to students, SBVI staff will continue to increase outreach efforts to school personnel and parents to inform them of the availability of transition services for students with vision loss.



The cause of visual impairment for most VR clients in PY2017 was due to a congenital condition/birth injury, physical disorder/condition or diabetes.



The national average for employment rate of individuals receiving services from blind agencies was 52.3% in PY2017. South Dakota exceeded the national average by 12.4% with an employment rate of 64.7%, **the fourth highest in the nation**. This graph reflects the top ten states with the highest employment rate compared to the national average. The percentage above the national average for each state is indicated in red.

Impacts to Employment

SBVI assisted 110 clients to successfully obtain employment in PY 2017. Those clients had a visual impairment as their primary disability, but 58% of them were also diagnosed with a secondary disability, which also impacts their ability to work. It is common for SBVI Counselors to work with clients who have multiple disabilities that affect more than their vision. SBVI continues to work with more clients with multiple disabilities as reflected in the following table.

Secondary Impairment	Closed Cases
Diabetes Mellitus	19
Cause unknown	7
Physical Disorders/ Conditions	6
Arthritis and Rheumatism	4
Depressive and other Mood Disorders	4
Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)	3
Accident/Injury (other than TBI or SCI)	2
Anxiety Disorders	2
Congenital Condition or Birth Injury	2
Intellectual Disability IQ <=70	2
Multiple Sclerosis	2
Schizophrenia and other Psychotic	2
Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder	1
Cardiac and other Conditions	1
Cerebral Palsy	1
Digestive	1
Epilepsy	1
Immune Deficiencies Excluding HIV/AIDS	1
Polio	1
Respiratory Disorders Fibrosis	1
Specific Learning Disabilities	1

“I am grateful for all you have done for me. I cannot thank you enough for all you have done. Very courteous manner. Very helpful, friendly.”

Barriers to Employment (Completed at IPE)	Yes Responses
Low Income	36%
TANF exhausted or never received	27%
Long Term Unemployment	16%
Ex-Offender	6%
Single Parent	4%
English Language Learner	3%
Basic skills deficiency/low levels of literacy	3%
Homeless	3%
Cultural Barriers	3%

Program Year 2017 is the first year that barriers to employment are being tracked by the Rehabilitation Services Administration for each VR agency. SBVI is seeing low income, TANF being exhausted, and long-term unemployment as the top barriers to individuals obtaining employment. After two years of compiling this type of data, RSA will be contacting SBVI to negotiate targets for performance measures. An accurate depiction of barriers within South Dakota could potentially assist in decreasing those target performance measures as part of the negotiation.

Overcoming Obstacles

The common words “you never know what someone is going through” couldn’t be more true. My name is Kacie Lawrence, and just like everyone else, I have encountered obstacles throughout my life. I was born in Eagle Butte, South Dakota and when I was eight years old, I was diagnosed with double vision.

I didn’t know this at the time but came to learn that double vision wasn’t an exact diagnosis but a symptom of a bigger problem. It didn’t take me long to realize that whatever was going on wasn’t something that would just “run its course”. I was referred to numerous doctors located throughout different hospitals that always provided me and my family with a potential “diagnosis”. I didn’t think much of it when I was 8 years old but eventually became exhausted when I was 17, missing out on my senior year of high school.



Although I appreciate all the specialists I’ve met on my journey, I concluded that I needed to stop looking for answers and start finding ways to overcome the one thing that was separating me from everyone else. I attended Sisseton High School and

was fortunate to have teachers that never hesitated to help find ways to accommodate for my vision. I always knew I wanted to continue my education and attend college after high school but was fully aware of my visual limitations.

It was when I started considering my options, my guidance counselor, Frank Gustafson, introduced me to Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired. I met with a rehabilitation counselor and felt relieved when I was informed that there were a wide variety of ways to overcome the barriers of having double vision and continuing education at a higher level. I was guilty of ignoring the fact that other people had the same or even greater struggles than I was having myself and was immediately shown that I wasn't alone.

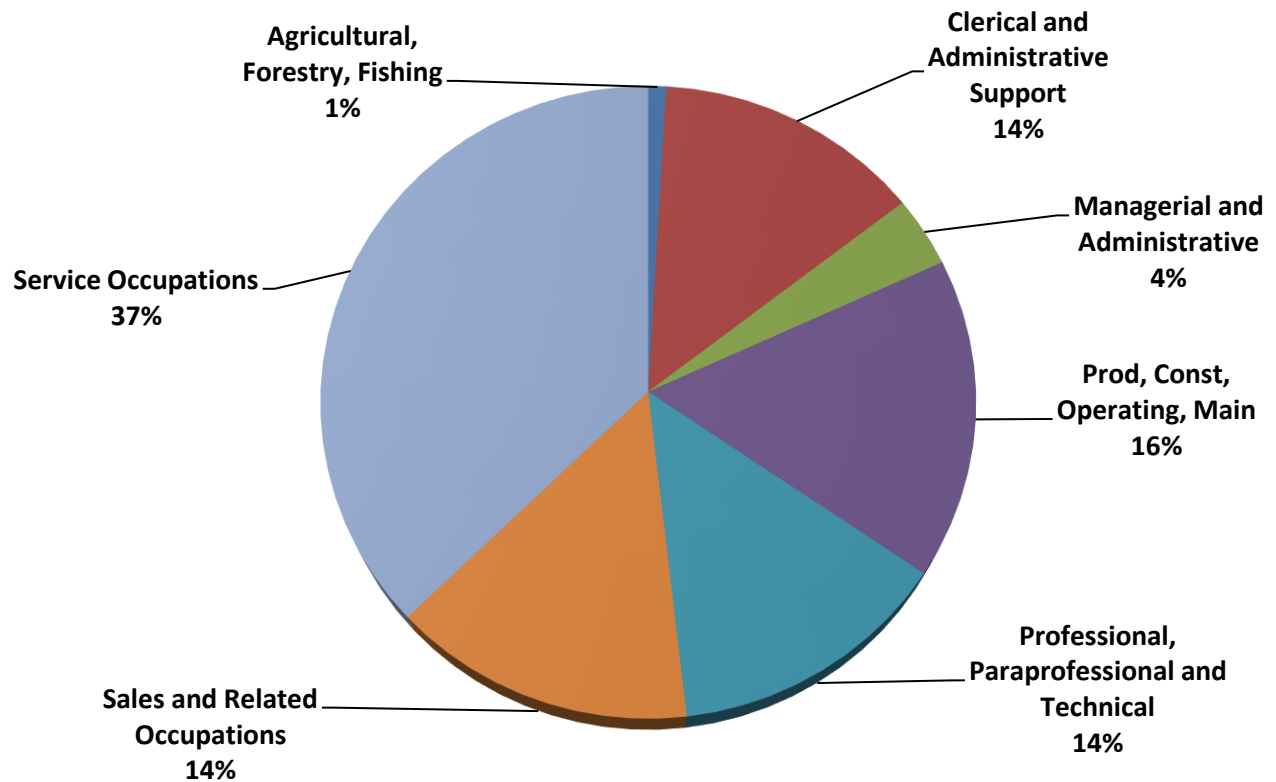
I was introduced to many different, but better ways to learn while lessening the physical and emotional symptoms associated with my vision. Being able to project words on the computer screen in front of me with the equipment I was provided and participate with students around me was an unfamiliar routine that I've come to enjoy. I was able to learn without putting the stress not only on my myself, but my eyes as well. The technology and financial help this program has provided helped me tremendously to become a better student and get to where I am today.

I currently have my Associates in Applied Science from Lake Area Tech and am working as a Physical Therapist Assistant. Prior to attending Lake Area, I completed 3 years of undergrad and still have a dream of getting my Doctor of Physical Therapy. My rehabilitation counselor has always encouraged me to do the best I can and has motivated me from my first year of college to my recent Board exam to become a licensed Physical Therapy Assistant.

In many ways, this program has helped me become successful in overcoming the obstacles I thought I was forced to face alone. I encourage other people with a similar story to come forward and look into this program to receive the help I once hoped for. I was a discouraged 8-year-old girl having difficulty completing the simple task of reading to being able to reach my full potential with continued support by Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired in moving forward.

“Nothing but praises for you guys. My counselor was great with follow-up as well as keeping an open line of communication.”

Occupations of Individuals Successfully Employed



In PY 2017, the Vocational Rehabilitation program helped 110 people to achieve their employment goals. This chart reflects the occupations of people successfully employed, with 37% of the jobs in Service Occupations; 16% were in production, construction, operating and maintenance; and professional, paraprofessional and technical, clerical and administrative support and sales and related occupations tying for third most common occupations at 14%.

“Giving positive motivation was so appreciated and feeling not so worthless. I would have to say above and beyond my expectations. I's so grateful for everyone's help! Because of the help I'm now working and have great health benefits to further my health in so many ways. It's a dream come true job. A job that I can be proud of and grow with. Has great health and other benefits. I am forever grateful. Thank you for everything.”

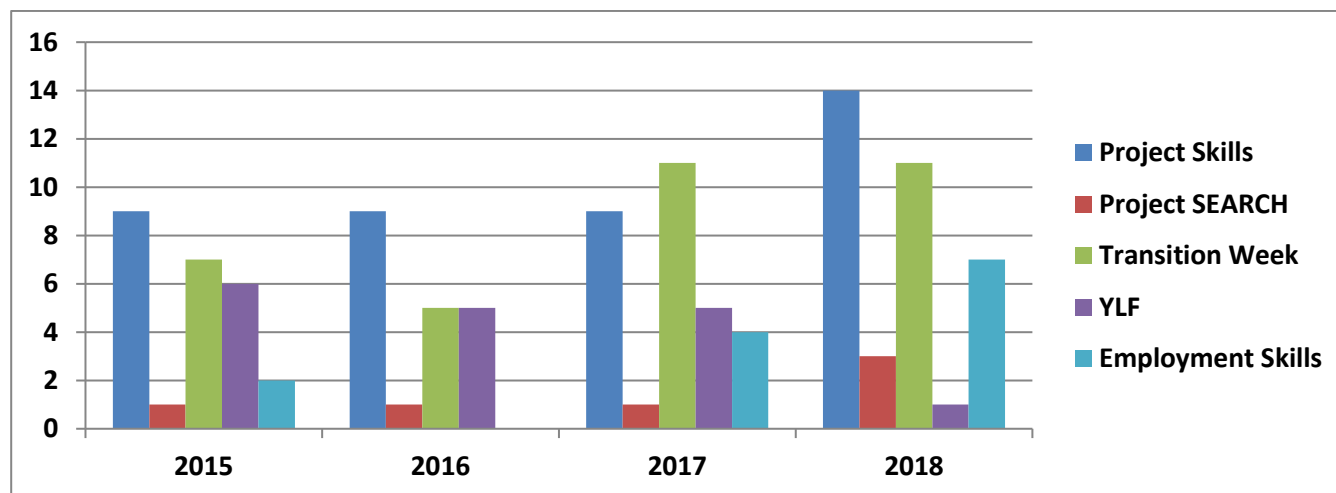
Vocational Rehabilitation Purchased Services Analysis

Services Provided	Total Paid
Rehabilitation Technology	\$307,693.68
Diagnosis and Treatment of Impairments	\$285,164.11
Disability-Related Skills Training	\$123,330.62
Assessment	\$116,764.16
Job Placement Assistance	\$94,002.01
Four-Year College or University Training	\$88,272.31
On-the-job Training	\$88,009.79
Maintenance	\$69,434.33
Transportation	\$40,752.06
On-the-job Supports - Short term	\$29,088.60
Benefits Counseling	\$14,514.45
Other Services	\$12,522.71
Occupational or Vocational Training	\$12,150.57
Junior or Community College Training	\$9,075.00
Job Search Assistance	\$5,608.52
Job Readiness Training	\$3,581.91
Miscellaneous Training	\$3,360.50
Interpreter Services	\$449.43

SBVI spent over \$1,303,700 providing services for VR participants. Services in this table are listed in descending order by total paid. Assistive technology services and devices, as well as physical restoration services, comprised 45% of VR case service expenditures. Physical restoration services are often necessary to prevent further deterioration of vision resulting in options for maximizing use of residual vision. Assistive technology services and devices are also an integral service for accessing information in a wide variety of occupations, as well as for post-secondary education.

Transition Activities for Students with Vision Loss

SBVI provides transition services for students with vision loss. Counselors assist with the development of transition plans and meet with students and parents, creating awareness of options after high school. The activities shown in the following graph illustrate how SBVI provides job exploration counseling, work-based learning experiences, counseling on post-secondary options, workplace readiness training and self-advocacy training. SBVI noted an increase in all transition activities, except for the Youth Leadership Forum, which occurs in Aberdeen the week before Transition week at the Rehabilitation Center for the Blind. SBVI experienced a substantial increase in the number of students receiving employment skills experiences.



Most Common Planned Services for Youth	Percent of Plans
Counseling and Guidance	89%
Transportation	35%
Assistive Technology Devices & Services	29%
Room and Board	29%
Project Skills	24%
Maintenance	18%
Tuition and Fees	12%
Job Coaching	11%
Books & Supplies	10%
Glasses, Optical Aids, Contact Lenses, & Prosthetics	9%

Counseling and guidance is the most common service for youth at 89%, followed by transportation to attend pre-employment transition activities at 35%.

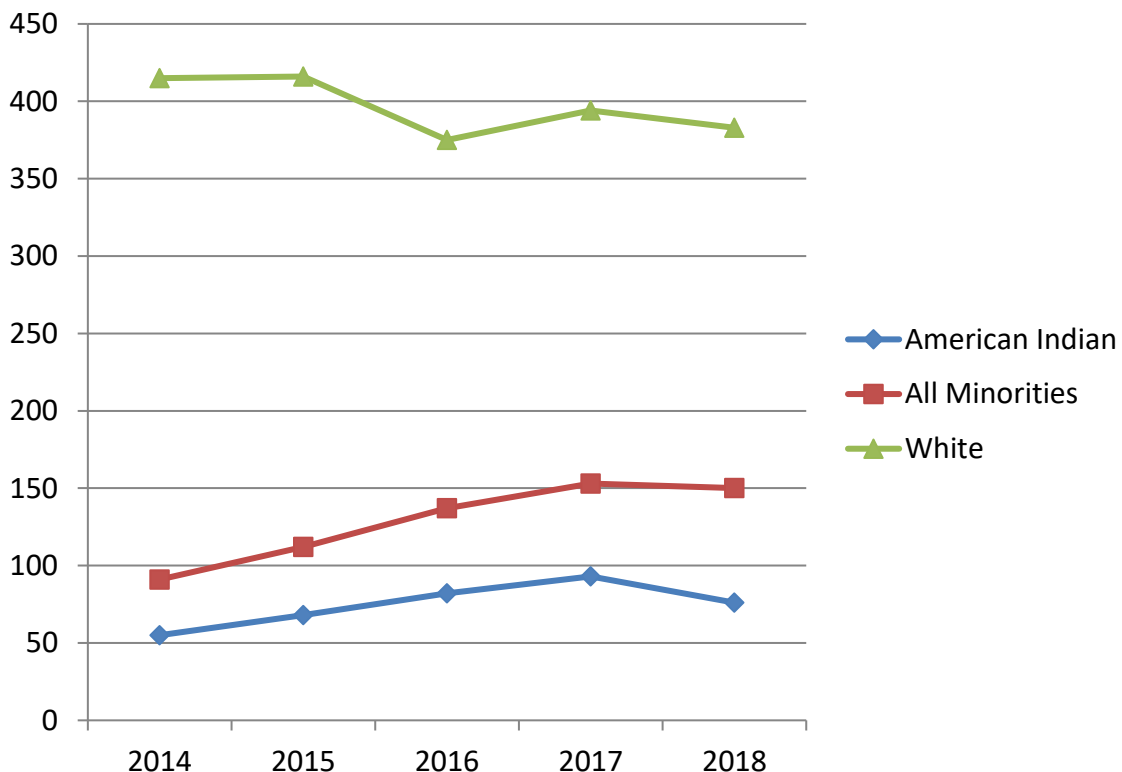
Transition Specialist

SBVI contracts with the SD School for the Blind & Visually Impaired for a Transition Specialist, who provides statewide transition services and outreach to schools and students with vision loss and blindness. The picture on the right is of Transition Specialist, Nichole Nelson and Aberdeen VR Counselor, Mike Webb demonstrating assistive technology to students at the Catch the Wave event in Eagle Butte.



Services to Minorities

According to the 2010 census, South Dakota's minority (non-white) population was 14.1%. The largest minority group in South Dakota involves American Indians from nine South Dakota Tribes making up 8.8% (2010 U.S. Census) of the state's total population. In PY 2017, 14% of those served by SBVI were comprised of individuals of American Indian descent, and 28% of all individuals served reported coming from a minority background. In the graph below, SBVI has increased services to individuals from minority backgrounds by 65% and has seen a decrease in services to non-minorities (Caucasian) by 8% in the past four years.



The Board and Division of SBVI work to address culturally relevant services for minority populations through a number of initiatives. The Director of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe Vocational Rehabilitation Program is a member of the Board of SBVI. The Unified State Plan specifically identifies areas of concern that arose from the analysis of the needs of individuals with disabilities who are minorities and/or have been unserved or underserved:

- Employer Public Outreach/Education - Public education targeted to language and cultural sensitivity as needed to better serve the unserved or underserved.
- Services for Native Americans - Collaboration, local education events, information/referral, economic development, more appropriate provider services, and cultural awareness.
- Transition Services - Address disengagement rates for high school exiters which remain disproportionately high for high school dropouts, exiters labeled ED, American Indians, and Hispanic persons.
- Self-Advocacy Skills - Expressions of the need to assist minority persons with the most significant disabilities to effectively represent their own needs in social and work settings.
- Cultural Understanding -The need for South Dakota citizens to better understand the implications and requirements of the cultures of the minorities who share the state.

Bi-annual State and Tribal VR meetings are conducted for information sharing and to identify and address specific needs and concerns. Staff also participated in National Disabilities Awareness Month Disability Summit in Eagle Butte in October 2018.

There were several visits made to Tribal VR programs in the state, including a meeting with the Lower Brule VR program in September, as well as a meeting with the Oglala Sioux Tribal VR Program in Kyle, SD on the Pine Ridge Reservation in November. These regular meetings help to enhance relationships, clarify roles for joint cases and provide the opportunity to discuss future training and awareness activities. Other

activities included participating in a Catch the Wave event for transition age students in Eagle Butte and sharing a booth to distribute information at the annual Lakota Nation Invitational basketball tournament in Rapid City.



“Without services, wouldn't be able to work. A big help & much appreciated. Staff were terrific.”

Cultural Diversity Training

The Department of Human Services (DHS) partnered with the Center for Disabilities Oyate' Circle, whose emphasis is to organize trainings and workshops for Native Americans with disabilities and cultivate relevant partnerships to better serve Tribal members. Diversity Training was provided to all DHS staff on Tribal lands to bring a better understanding of the needs of Native American people and better insights into their values and culture. Training topics were included with the intent to bring an understanding of the culture and to encourage collaboration between the Department of Human Services and Tribal programs. Tribal VR program staff also participated in events that were held throughout the state.



Wayne Weston, Oyate' Circle, USD Center for Disabilities Community Engagement Coordinator, presenting at the Department of Human Services Diversity Training.

VR Program Client Satisfaction Survey Analysis

SBVI partners with the Board of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired to conduct an annual client satisfaction survey, which consists of eight core questions that contribute to a composite satisfaction scale, Client Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSQ-8), Larsen, Attkisson, Hargreaves, and Nguyen (1979). An additional seven questions were developed with the help of the Board of SBVI, and consumers rated their satisfaction level from 1 (Poor) to 4 (Excellent). This is the 10th year that SBVI has conducted this annual survey.

Between October 1, 2017 and September 30, 2018, the survey was mailed out to 174 individuals who received services and were closed from the SBVI Vocational Rehabilitation Program during the past federal fiscal year. This is a 15% decrease in the number of surveys mailed out year compared to 204 surveys mailed out in FFY 17. The decrease in surveys mailed out is a result of a decrease in case closures. Of 174 questionnaires mailed out, 63 questionnaires were returned, which is a 36% response rate. This information gets sent to Dr. Alan Davis, Professor in the Department of Counseling and Human Development at South Dakota State University, who analyzes the data and provides the results in a report to SBVI. The table on the following page includes a summary of the average rating for responses.

Question	Average Rating
1. How would you rate the quality of service you received?	3.79
2. Did you get the kind of service you wanted?	3.79
3. To what extent has our program met your needs?	3.77
4. If a friend were in need of similar help, would you recommend our program to him/her?	3.90
5. How satisfied are you with the amount of help you received?	3.78
6. Have the services you received helped you to deal more effectively with your problems?	3.81
7. In an overall, general sense, how satisfied are you with the service you received?	3.68
8. If you were to seek help again, would you come back to our program?	3.93
9. Were you a full partner in the process to determine your employment goal and services to be provided?	3.73
10. Do you feel that the services provided by your counselor were necessary to obtain or keep your employment?	3.68
11. Were information and services provided to you in a timely manner?	3.78
12. Were information and services provided to you in a courteous manner?	3.86
13. Did the services help you adjust to your visual impairment?	3.72
14. How beneficial were services in assisting you in achieving more independence?	3.74
15. How satisfied are you with the employment that you obtained as a result of Vocational Rehabilitation Services?	3.75

Ratings range from 4 for excellent or strongly agree, to 1 for poor or strongly disagree. The average ratings reflect positively on services delivered by Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors, with the highest rating to the question: "If you were to seek help again, would you come back to our program?" at 3.93.

"So wonderful, I could never repay you. Beyond helpful. What they do for people losing their vision is wonderful."

INDEPENDENT LIVING BLIND PROGRAM (ILB)

Older citizens who experience vision loss should understand that losing vision doesn't have to mean losing independence. The ILB program helps blind and visually impaired individuals develop coping skills to manage their vision loss and alternative techniques to accomplish daily tasks which contributes to maintaining their independence.



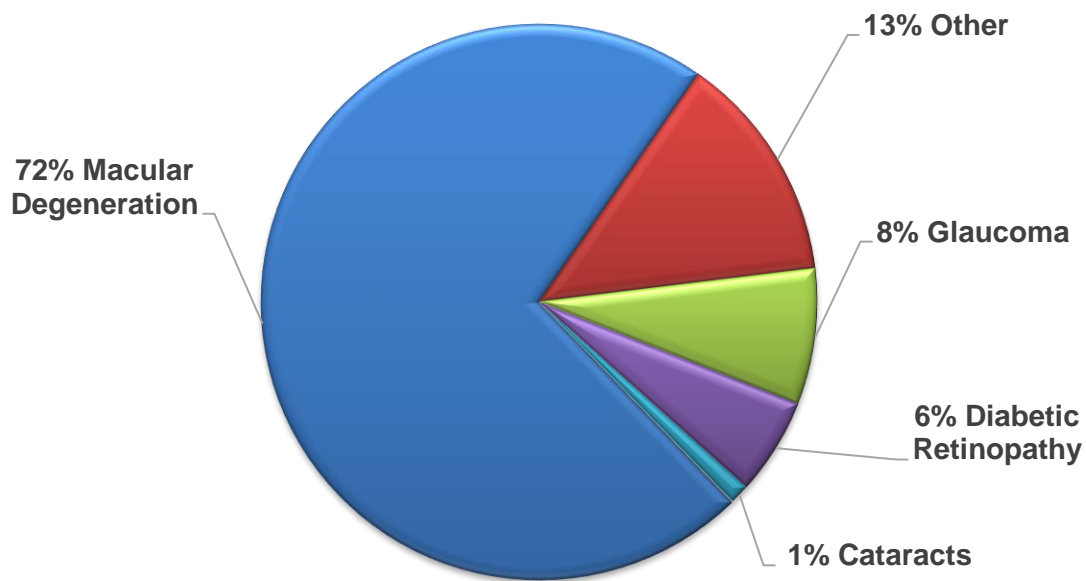
People with low vision struggle with many tasks in everyday life, not just reading books, but recipes, price tags, labels in department and grocery stores, or medicine and prescription bottles. With specialized training and problem-solving technology, individuals who experience vision loss can lead independent and self-sufficient lives.

The services listed below were provided to older citizens by the Independent Living Blind Program staff. Rehabilitation Teachers have the skills to provide specialty training to introduce aids and devices which allow individuals to resume their activities of daily living. During the past fiscal year, these services were provided to the 442 people who were served in the program. Most importantly, the services were determined by the individual and were based on the person's needs, interests and goals.

Type of Service and description	Number
Communication Skills-training in the use of the telephone, writing guides, telling time, or Braille, etc.	357
Daily Living Skills-training in the use of adaptive aids and assistive technology for daily living.	345
Low Vision Training-services related to the use of optical aids and devices.	405
Low Vision Aids-may include items such as canes, insulin gauges, CCTVs, magnifiers, adaptive cooking items, etc.	423
Counseling-Peer, individual, or group counseling to assist with adjustment to visual impairment and blindness	340
Low Vision Exams-Evaluations to identify strategies and devices for enhancing visual performance.	195
Advocacy Training- Training activities such as consumer organization meetings and peer support groups.	43
Referral to Other Agencies-Referral to other providers, programs and agencies.	292
Orientation and Mobility-Travel training and learning to access public or private transportation to travel safely and independently.	81

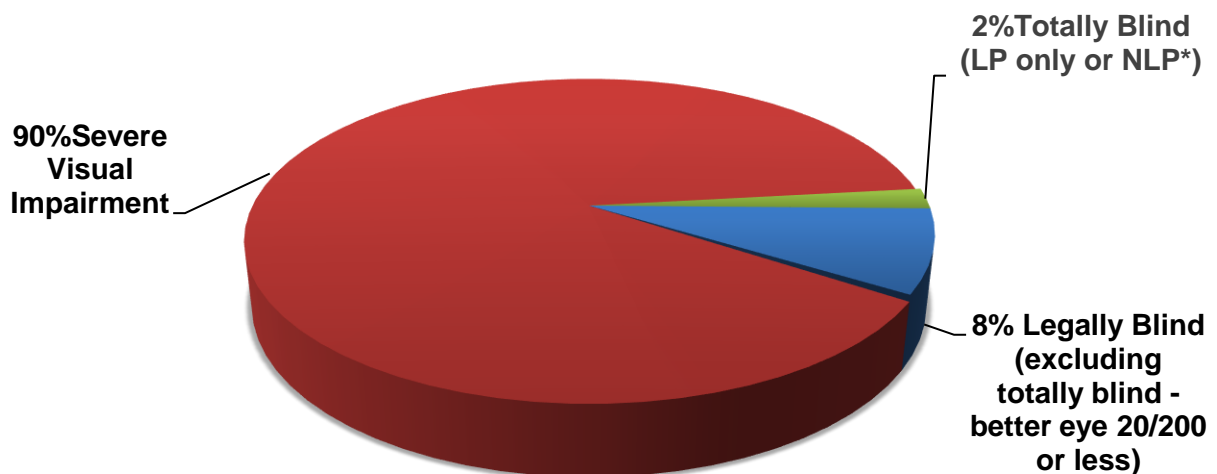
In FY 2018 the ILB program provided services to 442 older individuals with vision loss compared to 444 in FY 2017. Staff successfully closed 272 cases compared to 291 in FY 2017. In addition to providing services to older citizens who have severe vision loss, services were provided to 38 individuals under the age of 55.

Primary Eye Diseases for People Served



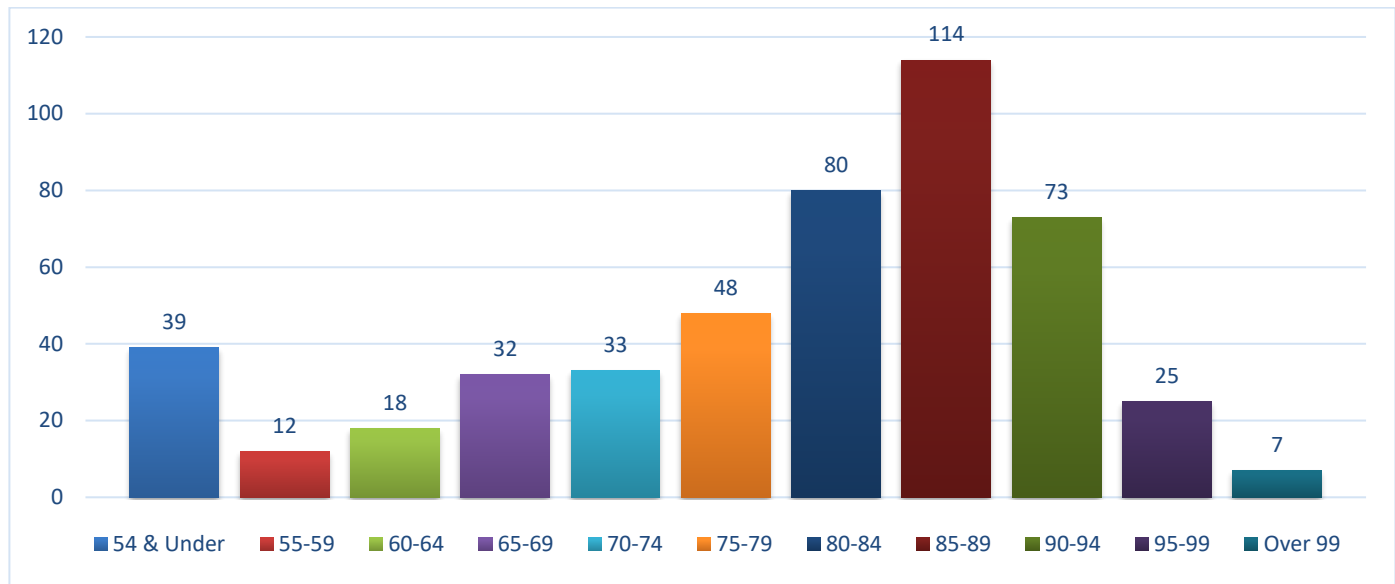
Degeneration was the primary cause of vision loss in 318 (72%) of the 442 individuals who received services in 2018 as reflected in the chart above. Age Related Macular Degeneration is a disease that blurs the sharp, central vision needed for straight-ahead activities such as reading, sewing, and driving. It affects an individual's ability to see fine detail but causes no pain, so it can be undetected for a period of time.

Degree of Vision Loss



Of the 442-people served in 2018; only 2% of them experienced total blindness with. Individuals who have some remaining vision that can be utilized to complete activities of daily living are often experiencing severe visual impairment which makes up 90% of the people served. The chart above explains the degree of vision loss experienced by the people served in 2018. * Light Perception or No Light Perception

Age Range of ILB Individuals Served in FY 2018



The target population for the ILB program is individuals over the age of 55 however, Rehabilitation Teachers also serve individuals under 55 who are experiencing vision loss. As reflected in this chart, in 2018, fifty one percent (299 individuals) of the 442-people served were over the age of 80 with seven people over the age of 100.

Satisfaction with Independent Living Services

Citizens who receive services from the ILB program have the opportunity to provide feedback through a satisfaction survey which is sent out quarterly. Survey responses assist SBVI to assess whether services are effective in assisting citizens to maintain or regain their independence. Two hundred forty-four surveys were sent out to those who achieved their independent living goals. 118 people responded to the survey which is a 48% response rate. Frequently the survey responses include statements expressing gratitude for services.

It is the goal of Service to the Blind & Visually Impaired that services from the Independent Living Program increase the opportunity for individuals to remain in their homes. To measure this, we ask program participants whether they would have considered moving into a facility with a higher level of care if they had not received services from the ILB program. Of the 118 survey responses, 34 or 28% of the individuals stated they did not have to move to a facility that provides a higher level of care because of the services and training they received.

“IL made life complete & worthwhile, I’m living in an apartment and am very appreciative of services.”

Public Outreach and Information & Referral

In 2018, Rehabilitation Teachers were involved with over 82 events with an estimated 1,800 attendees to share information about how to access services from SBVI. These events included community health fairs, employee in-service events, information sharing at local libraries or with targeted audiences such as pharmacists or hospital social workers along with presenting at public forums. In addition to events, staff members respond to approximately 400 individual calls and home visits in a timely manner to ensure people obtain the information they need to access independent living and other services. Pictured here, Nancy Kelsey provided information to approximately 80 individuals who stopped by the SBVI table at the Aberdeen Healthy Aging Fair to inquire about low vision aids and devices along with services to support low vision.



Electronic Video Magnification (CCTV) Lease/Loan Program

SBVI created the CCTV Lease/Loan program in 2004 with memorial funds donated specifically for providing devices for older citizens which could not be purchased using the limited Chapter II OIB grant funds. The CCTV program began with 24 units as a start-up to determine if we could address a need for older program participants who could not acquire the devices using insurance or Medicaid. The need for the table top magnification systems was immediately apparent and, the demand for units demonstrated that the program could be expanded. Since then, SBVI has purchased over 200 units and monitored the trends in technology which resulted in purchasing styles that were lightweight with high definition monitors to provide a magnified image of substantially higher resolution for individuals whose lifestyles were more mobile. In 2016, SBVI expanded the selection to include 4 text to speech reading units that not only magnify but provide auditory output of printed information. Any of these CCTV units may be leased for \$30 per month or loaned at no cost for those who meet economic need criteria. The CCTV Lease/Loan program currently has 224 units that have been placed with older citizens with vision loss. There are currently 124 units loaned and 95 leased which requires a minimal monthly fee. Sixty-five people obtained CCTVs from the Lease/Loan program in the past year which results in a total of 936 older citizens with low vision receiving CCTVs and training through this program since 2004.



“Helped me greatly & I appreciate all they have done.”

Adaptive Aids Contribute to Volunteer Work

Michael is 90 years old and still living in his home with severe vision loss. At the time of the referral to the Independent Living Blind Program, Michael was getting very depressed due to his vision loss impacting his ability to read print, he was especially discouraged about not being able to read his bible. During the initial interview, Michael was taught how to use a 3.5x handheld magnifier. After receiving instructions on the techniques to use it, he correctly held the magnifier and managed to read some of his bible which made him tearful with happiness. Because it's portable, Michael takes his magnifier everywhere he goes. Further discussion also revealed Michael struggled to see his watch which resulted in problems with managing his schedule. After reviewing some options, Michael decided a high contrasting watch with a black background and white numbers was clear enough for him to be able to read the time again. Bump dots were placed on his microwave and his TV remote and bold, contrasting numbers were placed on his flat panel microwave. When asked about how the markings were helping him at the next visit, Michael stated he didn't realize how hard it was to do daily activities until he didn't have to struggle anymore. Michael also received a large print calendar which he can see clearly that will help to keep track of the days as he volunteers at the nursing home twice a week.



Enjoying Life Again

Gail is a gentleman that experienced severe loss of vision to his visual fields caused by a stroke during heart surgery. With the assistance of SBVI's independent living services, he gained confidence with traveling skills using a white support cane and sighted guide techniques. He was provided instruction on the importance of bright directional lighting which assists him to see food on his plate. He mastered writing again using bold writing pens and reading print again with proper illumination with the Stella lamp. Because of a referral to the Telecommunication Access Device Program, he was provided a phone with built-in accessible features which allows him to make and receive telephone calls. He was also referred to his telephone company for free directory assistance which enables him to access unfamiliar numbers. He feels that due to the training from his Rehabilitation Teacher and referrals to additional programs, he can cope better with his vision loss and is thankful for the resources available to him. Gail and his wife recently returned from a cruise they previously canceled due to the vision loss. He said with the low vision training and skills he developed in orientation and mobility, they had a successful and enjoyable trip and are already planning for future trips. He said his vision loss is no reason to not enjoy life.



“Vision machine restored confidence & eliminated depression. Machine is unbelievable. Thankful for services.”

SOUTH DAKOTA REHABILITATION CENTER FOR THE BLIND

The SD Rehabilitation Center for the Blind (SDRC) is located in Sioux Falls, and provides services to citizens of South Dakota who are blind, visually impaired or have other disabilities to help them learn adaptive skills of blindness and gain employment. SDRC's goal is to provide the tools, training, and technology to help individuals overcome the challenges they face because of vision loss or a disability impacting their ability to work and live independently.

Adaptive Skills of Blindness

The Rehabilitation Center provides classes daily to teach adaptive skills of blindness. These classes include home management, communications, computers with assistive technology, orientation and mobility, peer support, and leisure activities. During FY2018, forty-five people attended classes, an increase of 12 people compared to FY2017. 20% of students who attended SDRC were blind, 34% percent were legally blind, 29% had a visual impairment, and 17% were sighted professional staff. Most of the students also have secondary disabilities making training even more challenging. Diabetes was the most common condition, followed by deafness and hearing loss, as well as mental health concerns. Other conditions included brain injuries and learning disabilities.



The number of men versus women was almost equal, with 22 women and 23 men.



The average age was 41.7, which is consistent with 2017. SDRC served a greater number of transition- age youth during the summer months which resulted in a lower average age for the last few years.

While attending training at the Center in Sioux Falls, we provide a comfortable stay in our furnished and secure apartments located within 2 miles of the Center. Students utilize public transportation, taxi, or family and friends to get to

training. There is no cost to the student to stay in the apartments while in training. Since it is a "crime-free housing unit", a clean background check is required for anyone to stay, and they must be at least 18 years of age. Local arrangements, such as hotels, are also available if students are unable to live in the Center's apartments while attending training.

Assistive Technology (AT) First Friday Clinics

South Dakota residents who have questions about technology, can stop in at the Rehabilitation Center for the Blind during the morning of the first Friday of each month to get help from our assistive technology specialist. In the afternoon, a class is offered on a variety of skills of blindness topics. During FY2018, thirty-one people came for help with assistive technology and 36 people came to attend an afternoon skills training class. In addition, the assistive technology instructor answered questions via email, Facetime, Skype, or by telephone. She spent over 80 hours answering questions from 105 contacts in 2018. This was a significant increase of 54 from 2017.



Typically, instruction during walk-in assistive technology clinics is approximately 1 to 2 hours of one-to-one or group instruction. During First Friday a class is offered that has an emphasis on blindness skills development. Examples include winter orientation and mobility, cooking without sight, the new Braille code rules, non-sighted leisure activities, as well as other topics that are requested by those interested in participating.

Low Vision Clinics

Low vision clinics provide specialized services to help people find adaptive equipment, so they can better utilize their vision. There were 18 clinics and 85 people received low vision evaluations at the Rehabilitation Center for the Blind in 2018. This is a decrease of 9 people from 2017. Referrals to the clinic are received from SBVI counselors and teachers and the number of people referred is dependent on the needs of clients. Dr. Paul Greenfield, a Sioux Falls Optometrist, provides the low vision examinations twice a month. Dr. Greenfield was recognized by the members of the Association for the Education and Rehabilitation for the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER) with the “Friends of AER” award for his work with youth and adults in South Dakota due to his provision of thorough low vision examinations. Low vision is a specialized field, and Dr. Greenfield’s dedication to the profession is appreciated by those he works with.



On-site Orientation and Mobility

People who live outside of Sioux Falls who experience difficulty getting around independently due to vision loss, are offered services in their home communities from a certified orientation and mobility specialist. Individual circumstances sometimes prevent them from attending the Rehabilitation Center so on-site assistance is provided. This is not intended to be a full orientation and mobility program, but to assist with basic skills to get around or provide additional training specific to their home or work environment. With South Dakota being a rural state, this service is limited to the eastern part of South Dakota. During 2018, these services were provided to 27 people for a total of 440 hours, averaging 16 hours per person. Counselors and teachers are beginning to recognize the value of on-site orientation and mobility instruction which resulted in services to 17 more people in 2018 than in 2017. The type of services provided included: orientation within their home environment, teaching how to use a specialized GPS device, functional low vision assessments, and training on distance viewing devices.



SDRC Service	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018
Transition Students	7	5	11	11
Low Vision Patients	105	85	94	85
Employment Specialist	19	22	27	26
Skills of Blindness	45	44	37	45
Employment Skills Training	84	102	93	90
O&M On-site	1	10	10	27
AT Walk-in Clinic & First Friday Classes	68	86	51	105
Total	329	354	323	389

The total number of people participating in services exceeds previous years. The biggest increase occurred in the number of people participating in AT Walk-in Clinics and First Friday classes. In addition, the number of people who received on-site orientation and mobility training more than doubled.

Transition Week 2018

During the summer, the Center hosts a Transition Week for students across the state that have vision loss. Eleven students attended in 2018. They explored different employment opportunities, learned about the interviewing process, gained independent living skills, and enjoyed evening recreational activities. The week ended with a panel of 2 employed individuals and 2 college-bound individuals. The transition students enjoyed hearing about the panel's life experiences and how they overcome obstacles caused by vision loss.



South Dakota Vocational Resources



Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors from Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) and Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI) refer individuals to Employment Skills Training (EST) for a variety of assessments, accommodations evaluations, to gain computer skills, make a career change, explore career options, and learn

interviewing skills. During the summer, an increase in high school students who are blind/low vision or nearing graduation, attend as they start to prepare for life after high school. The Adaptive Skills of Blindness classes helps students with vision loss gain additional independent living skills and EST helps prepare them for future employment or college. The Center works as a team with the VR Counselor and the student's high school to make sure the student is prepared for their future.

The Employment Skills team is creative when working with people who attend training. An assessment of their needs is done based on their choice of career path. An example of tasks done during assessment include folding towels and carrying them from one area to another. This demonstrates whether they can navigate independently while carrying heavy items. Clients may try vacuuming, washing and carrying trays in a simulated kitchen, or using a cash register. These tasks give information about the individual's ability to follow multi-step directions, gross motor skills, and stamina. The information received after training will assist the VR counselor with helping the person find appropriate employment opportunities.

Everyone attending EST participates in a class called World of Work. It focuses on the interview process and workplace etiquette. The peer support and assistance from knowledgeable staff help clients learn how to find job opportunities, as well as conduct a professional interview. Employment Skills Training served 90 individuals in 2018, compared to 93 in 2017. A slight decrease in the number of people served

might be attributed to the low unemployment rates and fewer people seeking services to help obtain employment.

Employment Services provided job placement services to 26 individuals in 2018. There was an increase in referrals because of a reduction in job placement providers accepting referrals in the Sioux Falls area. The Employment Specialist continues to build connections with employers within the community. This expertise on employer's human resource needs brings beneficial information to the World of Work class.

Satisfaction Survey Responses

A survey about satisfaction with services is provided to each participant who completes the Skills of Blindness program and Employment Skills Training. In the Skills of Blindness area, there was an 83% return rate for the surveys from the individuals that completed training. The overall rating was 3.6 on a 4.0 scale, which falls between the ratings of (3) Agreed and (4) Strongly Agreed to the questions about the quality of services. Examples of the responses received for the question, "What did you like best about the program?" were:

"I liked it all; I can't pick just one thing. All of it works together to make me feel more confident and independent with my vision loss."

"I liked everything. It was a great all-around program and I'd recommend it to anyone who needs Skills of Blindness or Employment Skills training."

"The patience and skill set of the instructors."

"Staff! Knowledge and willingness to help."

The EST area uses a similar format of questions and narrative responses to obtain information about services. The return rate for EST surveys was 93%. The overall rating was a 3.5 on a 4.0 scale, which falls between the ratings of (3) Agreed and (4) Strongly Agreed. The EST survey brought in many positive comments. A few of the comments were:

"Was a positive environment, patient, open and focused on my needs!!"

"The staff; they were very helpful and felt they genuinely cared about each person."

"The courtesy and accessibility of the teacher(s). PROFESSIONALISM."

A common suggestion for how to improve services was adding an additional instructor or helper. This has been a consistent suggestion over the past years because there is only one instructor regardless of the number of students attending training, and she needs to find coverage during her intake and progress meetings.

Success Story - Zay Norman

Zay is a prominent, successful rancher/farmer from central South Dakota near the Missouri River. He grew up near Hayes, SD and has lived in that area his entire life. His life's ambition has always been ranching and farming and living the outdoor ranching life. Zay and his wife Carrie have two adult daughters who love to come home and spend time on the ranch.

Zay's vision problems began when he had heart bypass surgery in January 2017. His blood pressure dropped very low and stayed too low, preventing enough blood supply to the optic nerve. The optic nerve swelled causing damage. Zay can see shapes but little detail unless he is using a telescope to bring far away images closer.



Zay is no longer able to drive and depends on family, friends, and hired help for transportation. Since he is no longer able to operate tractors or farm machinery, he manages the ranch. Zay attended the South Dakota Rehabilitation Center for the Blind in Sioux Falls for training in skills to adapt to his vision loss. He learned how to get around safely using a white cane, to use a personal GPS device to navigate from one place to another outside, to use specialized computer software so he can access his computer, and all the other skills for non-sighted independence.

Zay is ambitious and didn't want to stay in the house. He wanted to get out and ride his horses around the ranch and to make his own decisions about his ranching operation by recording vaccinations, monitoring calving, caring for the cattle, and determining the right time to sell the cattle; as well as monitoring planting, fertilizing, harvesting, and selling his crops. Zay, being an avid horseman, wanted to be able to ride his horse to check water wells and work cattle in his pastures independently. To achieve this, Zay worked with an orientation and mobility specialist who taught him how to use a device called a Trekker, which is a personal GPS that will guide Zay using satellite technology.

Zay wants to share his experiences and make sure others know there is help available to those who experience vision loss. He was appointed to the Board of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired by Governor Daugaard in 2018.

Business Enterprise Program

The Business Enterprise Program (BEP) provides opportunities for individuals who are legally blind to be self-employed in food service, operating cafeterias, coffee shops, and vending routes.

The Randolph-Sheppard Act authorizes State Licensing Agencies to recruit, train, license, and place individuals who are blind as operators of vending facilities located on federal and other properties. The act authorizes a blind individual, licensed by the state licensing agency, to conduct specified activities in vending facilities through permits or contracts. In South Dakota, SBVI is the state licensing agency.

SBVI and the Business Enterprise Program have permits for food and vending services at the following locations:

- Earth Resources Observation and Science (EROS) Center, Garretson;
- General Services Administration in Federal Buildings in Sioux Falls, Aberdeen, and Huron;
- The US Postal Service for facilities in Sioux Falls, Huron, and Pierre;
- The US Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Prisons, in Yankton; and
- SBVI has an Interagency Agreement with the South Dakota Bureau of Administration for vending machines in multiple State buildings in Pierre.

Four vendors were licensed with the Business Enterprise Program in January 2018. Sheila Powers managed vending in state office buildings in Pierre but passed away



unexpectedly in late January. Deanna Deering, her employee, currently manages the vending route until a qualified blind vendor is available to take over the business. Celeste Centenaro manages the café at the Federal Building in Aberdeen along with vending in federal properties. She also manages EROs Data Center as a satellite location. Dan Munce manages a vending route with machines in various locations in Huron.

Marilyn Steffen managed the vending at the Yankton Federal Prison from 1995 until her retirement at the end of November 2018. We wish Marilyn the best in her retirement. Due to the inability to recruit a qualified blind vendor; the Division of SBVI relinquished priority at this location.

The annual vendor's meeting was held in October 2018. The Vendor Committee elected Celeste as the Chair and Dan Vice Chair of the Vendor Committee.



Vendor Financials

Following is a breakdown of sales and net profits earned by BEP vendor operators.

Earnings and Expenses				
	2015	2016	2017	2018
Gross Sales (Total Income)	\$446,428	\$449,385	\$368,890	\$432,909
Merchandise Purchases	\$241,596	\$246,962	\$200,472	\$240,724
Gross Profit	\$204,832	\$202,422	\$168,418	\$192,185
Total Operating Expenses	\$101,523	\$137,624	\$101,416	\$115,735
Net Proceeds	\$115,561	\$ 75,060	\$ 79,138	\$ 65,921
Levied Set Aside Funds	\$ 15,102	\$ 12,130	\$ 11,361	\$ 11,034
Net Profit to Vendors	\$100,460	\$ 62,929	\$ 67,778	\$ 54,887

Gross profits are on the rise for BEP vendors. The overall increase of gross profits rose to \$432,909 compared to \$368,890 in 2017. Our locations are stabilizing with less staff turnover in 2018. The demand for vending is increasing as the programs are expanding selections for customers. In addition, the program has been working on making any repairs in a timely manner to reduce lost revenue. The program will experience one retirement in 2018; the vendor at the Yankton Federal Prison retired effective November 26, 2018. The equipment will be distributed to other vendors or be sold as surplus. Those machines will allow for more selections at the other vending sites.

Interstate Rest Area Vending

Through an agreement with the SD Department of Transportation, the Business Enterprise Program (BEP) is responsible for vending at the South Dakota rest areas along Interstates 90 and 29.

The SD Departments of Transportation and Tourism have developed a Revitalization Plan for these rest areas. During 2018, the Wasta rest areas (East and Westbound), along I-90, were reopened after remodeling. The advantages to the remodel are that vending will be located inside in most of the renovated rest areas. This will provide protection of the machines and product against the natural elements and allow for increased sales due to location.



Current contracts with third-party vendors for designated rest areas began June 1, 2016 and will expire May 30, 2019. Contracts were awarded to the vendors who bid

to contribute the highest percentage of commission from sales to the BEP. Current commissions paid to the BEP range from 45% to 62%. A request for bids will be released in the spring of 2019 for vending from June 2019 through May 2022.

Income from rest area commissions for June 1, 2017, through May 31, 2018, was \$66,501 for I-90 rest areas and \$9,638 for I-29 rest areas, totaling \$76,139. The majority of BEP expenses are paid utilizing revenue from rest area vending.

The rest area commissions are utilized to support the BEP program. The available funds are used to purchase and repair new equipment. Furthermore, funds are spent on vendor needs, such as insurance, bookkeeping, and membership to the South Dakota Retailers Association.

Journey to Success

My name is William Deng and I am the founder of the Deng-Foundation. I was born and raised in South Sudan. Like most boys in southern Sudan, I grew up as a Cattle Boy, herding cattle from one field to the next. Because of the turmoil and poverty caused by the civil wars, I was forced to work rather than attend school. I still dreamed of being able to go to school and getting an education. My dream of getting an education and living a secure life seemed impossible unless I escaped the current situation and did.



I believe that God protected me throughout my long journey, first to Northern Sudan, and, eventually, all the way to the United States. By the time I made it to the United States, I was 14 with only a third-grade education. After much hard work, I graduated from Roosevelt High School in Sioux Falls, and then from Northern State University in Aberdeen, with a bachelor's degree in International Business, a minor in Economics, and a master's degree in Banking and Finance.

I became the first person from my family and village to graduate from high school and college. I finally achieved my dream. My next goal is to bring educational and healthcare infrastructures to South Sudan. This goal prompted me to create the Deng-Foundation.

I was super excited to be done with school and start looking for a job and while I was searching for job opportunities, I found out that I had pterygium which is a growth that starts on the clear tissue of the eye that can spread to the cornea. The doctor said I needed surgery or I would go blind. I was a college graduate with no money, family, job or health insurance to pay for surgery that I badly needed. I had many dreams that I needed to achieve and would be impossible for me to do so if I could not see. I was extremely fearful and worried every day and didn't know what else to

do. I came to Mike and told him my situation and without any hesitation, he said we will help you. Long story, cut short, Mike saved me from not only going blind but also kept my dreams alive because there was no way that I was going to be able to pay for my surgery given my circumstances.

In addition to that, to helping me with my eye surgery; Mike also helped me get a job and made sure that I was going to be successful in my job. Because of his assistance, my eye is better today, I have a full-time job with health insurance and I am working on achieving my dreams. I am very optimistic about my future and my dreams and beyond grateful and feel blessed because of the help I have received from Mike. From the bottom of my heart and with my deepest gratitude, I say thank you although it may not be enough. God bless!



SERVICE TO THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED OFFICES

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For more information go to the SBVI web site at: <http://dhs.sd.gov/servicetotheblind>

Please contact the SBVI state office in Pierre to request alternative formats.